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Please help me not become homeless in winter.

Tamea Burd is organizing this fundraiser.

Created 2 days ago • Emergencies

The name of this fundraiser is accurate. Without your help, I'm about to lose my housing, and have to give away my 2 kitties, who mean everything to me. I've been self-employed as a photographer for 15 years. The pandemic has demolished my business and my finances. I'm disabled, so finding other work has been pretty much impossible. It's been an incredibly hard few years, and now I'm not just struggling; I'm drowning. Depression, hunger, stress, physical pain, and the daily growing terror that I'm about to become homeless in the dead of winter.

I have no family to ask for help. I have nothing to sell, or I already would have. Since this past summer, I've paid for rent, food, bills, and medical expenses with my bank overdraft and credit cards - which I can't even make minimum payments on now. I'm behind on my bills, and my

heat, electricity, phone and internet will soon be cut off. I'm eating a very small meal once a day, to make my dwindling supply of food last as long as possible. My fridge has nothing in it but condiments and ice. I have no money for rent. Worst of all, my kitties are almost out of food and litter; they only have enough for another week.

Please excuse the probably too long description here. I've never done anything like this before. I've been on my own since I was 14 years old, and asking for help, is not something I'm used to doing. But I'm choosing to see that creating this Gofundme, is an opportunity to grow past that, and to learn to put more trust in people's kindness and generosity.

My situation has become this bad and scary for a few reasons. One being that although I've made multiple attempts, I've been turned down for government assistance every time I've applied. Believe me; I've gone down every single avenue there is, from every direction there is, and hit a dead end every time. So financial assistance is unfortunately not an option. I've tried applying to local food-banks and charitable organizations. None of them are currently accepting new applicants. I get it. It's the worst possible time of the year to be in need, for a lot of people, for a lot of reasons.

Just as unfortunately, finding other work isn't an option either. My disability isn't just one thing, it's several. I suffer from chronic pain, chronic exhaustion, and nerve damage in my right leg, foot, and hip. I'm often rendered completely useless with blinding headaches and dizziness. But wait, there's more... I also have very weak hands, wrists, ankles, and feet, all of which I sprain frequently. I have to wear an ankle-brace and a wrist-brace more often than not. I have days when I can't walk without crutches, or can't straighten up properly, or can't sit down on a chair at all.

My body is a wonderland of unpredictable disabilities. It's impossible for me to keep to a regular schedule, or to guarantee that I'll even be functional from one day to the next. That unreliability (which breaks my heart) is why I'm completely unable to work for anyone other than myself.

Selling my camera equipment isn't a practical solution. It's not worth much second-hand, and I need it to do my job, whenever work does pick up for me again.

Photography work has been very, very slow for me since the pandemic started. In the last six months, it's been non-existent. 99% of my clients find me by doing a Google search. This past June, Google decided it didn't like my website, and I disappeared from search results. I've spent the last couple of months working nearly every day, figuring out what to fix, and how to fix it. Which I think I've finally managed to do. And that's great in the long term, but if you look up 'how long for a website to recover from an algorithm penalty', the time it takes to get your site back into the first few pages of search results, is generally six months AFTER you fix everything.

So it'll be at least a few more months before work starts for me again.

I really have been trying to take care of myself despite my obstacles and limitations. A few months ago, I joined some freelancer sites to do admin/editing/proof-reading work from home. I've applied for several jobs and haven't gotten one of them. The sense of rejection made my already fragile mental health so much worse.

Having left an abusive home when I was so young, and having nobody to rely on except for myself for my entire life, I've gone through some very hard times. But writing this and sharing it, is one of the hardest things I've ever done. I feel so ashamed that I'm not better able to take care of myself. I feel frustration and sadness that I'm so limited by my disability. Every day is a weird combination of, 'I REFUSE TO GIVE UP, I REFUSE TO STOP TRYING' and 'I REALLY DON'T KNOW IF I CAN KEEP GOING.' I feel so hopeless. I feel so afraid that I'll ask for help, and I won't be helped.

But all I can do is to face that fear and shame, and ask for your help anyway. Hopefully I've done a decent job of explaining what's going on, and why. Your donation will keep me from starving and becoming homeless over the next few cold, snowy months. Your generosity will keep me from having to give away my dearly loved kitties.

Writing this has been so draining, and - something else I'm now learning - it's very hard to type when you're crying. I'm going to finish by thanking you for taking the time to read this. Even though it makes me feel so uncomfortable, I need to ask you to **please share and post the link to this fundraiser on your social media**. The more of you who see this, the more possible it is that I can keep a roof over my head, keep the heat and lights on, and have enough food for myself and my two adorable (but super naughty) little cats.

They say every time a bell rings, an angel gets their wings. I happen to have a little silver bell, which I promise to ring for each of you. Thank you for helping me learn to trust in kindness.

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Tamea Burd
Organizer
Vancouver, BC

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Report fundraiser

$2,525 CAD raised of $5,500 goal

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